GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:290
ANSWERED ON:20.11.2002
RELEASE OF INDIAN FISHERMEN
BHIM PRASAD DAHAL;RAMSHETH THAKUR;REENA CHOUDHARY;SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of Indian fishermen have been arrested, jailed and killed in Sri Lanka;

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years till date;

(c) the steps taken by the Government for the release of the jailed/arrested fishermen, and

(d) the remedial steps proposed to be taken by the Government for the safety and protection of fishermen engaged in fishing in deep seas?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA)

(a), (b) & (c). The arrest and subsequent detention of Indian fishermen by Sri Lankan authorities is on charges of poaching in Sri Lankan territorial waters or drifting into Sri Lankan territorial waters.The number of Indian fishermen arrested and those killed during the last three years is given below:

	2000	2001	2002 (Jan.-Nov.)
Arrested	25	118	99
Killed	5	7	0

(c) Government maintains regular contact with Sri Lanka through diplomatic channels for securing the early release and repatriation of Indian fishermen in Sri Lankan custody. The matter is taken up at appropriate levels in both New Delhi and Colombo and is pursued till the fishermen are released and repatriated.

(d) Government have suggested to the Sri Lankan Government that our fishermen may be licensed to fish in their north-eastern waters.

Both sides agree that these cases should be dealt with in a spirit of compassion and understanding, in accordance with established legal procedures and in a humane manner.